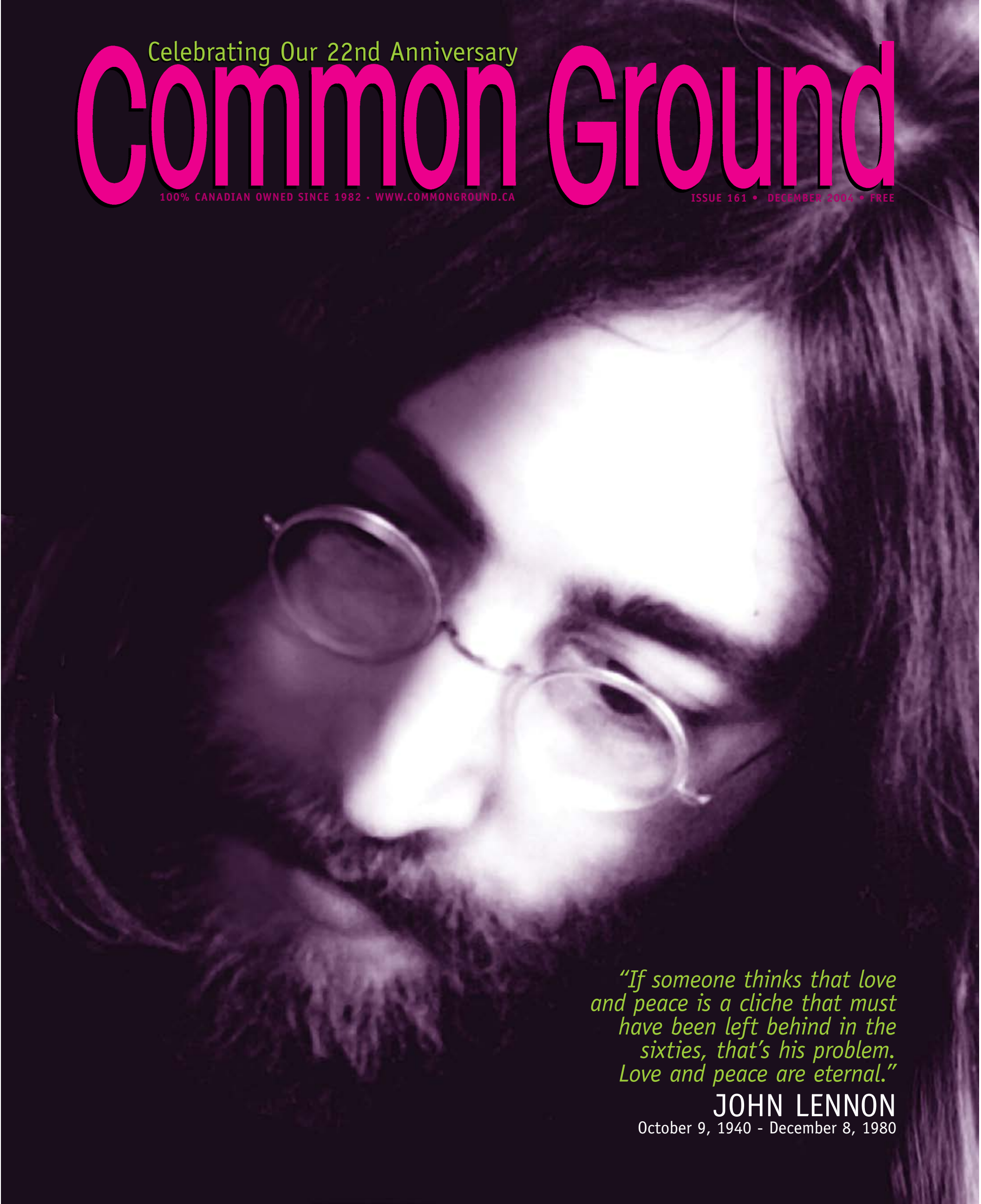


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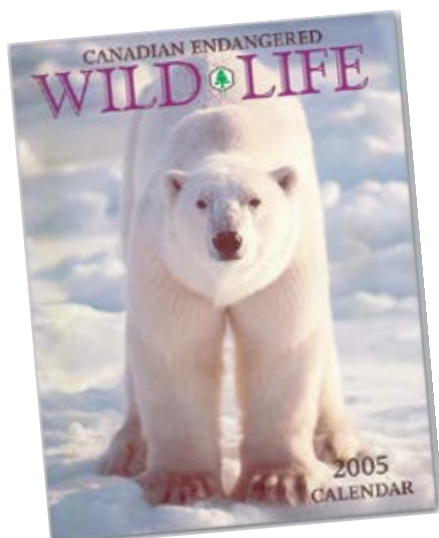
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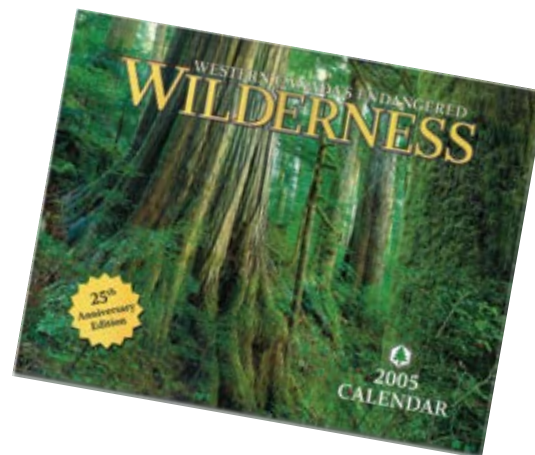
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Inspiring personal growth

FROM 1960 TO NOW - AN INTERVIEW WITH MARILYN ATKINSON

by Joseph Roberts

Joseph Roberts: You have an incredible overview from decades of direct experience in various personal growth movements. What has happened over the last 40 years and where are we now?

Marilyn Atkinson: I think that as we enter the 21st century we're entering a new area of human development. I was part of the gestalt movement in the '60s and spent time with Fritz Perles, and then in the '70s with Virginia Satir. I explored a lot of different spiritual paths – Sufi and Buddhist teachings. I worked with the primal approach to psychology.

I was very much interested in the whole rise of the commitment frame in large personal workshops where people said, "Hey, I can take my life in my hands and move forward here." So, I developed my own seminars through those years, working with NLP and Ericksonian hypnotherapy, solution-focused methods and accelerated learning, and those were all major learning frames for me and a lot of other people. But we are in a new era now. The 21st century is different.

JR How is it different?

MA First of all right now the pressure for change is huge. The rise of China and India, all sorts of different cultures melding into one global stream, has created a conversation. The conversation is on the internet. It's happening between us all. And that's never been that way before. There's an over-culture now forming

on the globe that has everybody in on the same conversations. Afghanistan is off in their corner know a lot more about the world than 15 years ago.

JR While traveling and teachings around the world, how do you see the over-culture emerging?

MA This last month I was teaching in central Russia, in London and Norway as well as in various areas of Canada and the US. Next week it's Australia.

Erickson College is known throughout Russia. We have centres, and I was recently teaching in Ekaterinburg, the third largest city in Russia, and Voronezh a wonderful old city in the centre of Russia. We have a strong Erickson College established in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

JR What's emerging in Moscow?

MA It's like Chicago in the '30s. There are some things that are very much a play of black and white, rich and poor. Yet, what's coming through,

like a tide, is the rise of a real intelligentsia and it's a human one that we're finding in every culture that has to do with what I call level seven thinking, a deeper understanding.

It's a focus on world culture and the rise of a real interest in developing the world, our communality in and around even our differences. But the focus of level seven culture – well, let me explain a bit about spiral dynamics first.

Spiral dynamics is the study of value systems or value means. They're huge streams of values, like currents that go through the oceans, the big ones, to Japan

humans." Other groups were considered non-human and that's still to be found in some of the political mythologies that we hear spoken pretty widely in camps that fight each other.

If we look at the rise of different definitions of what it means to be human we find it can mean to have enough success to go out and build your own entrepreneurial system, or to follow the right political ideology, or it means you're politically correct in terms of taking care of other people, but only the way you're supposed to according to your group.

I think what's coming out of the new "level seven" currents is a focus on innovation and the human capacity for creative thinking that can redefine our relationships productively, flexibly and with love.

JR Who are some of the people that helped create this new renaissance?

MA I spent a lot of time working with Fritz Perles, spent two summers as his direct student. And also I worked with Virginia Satir, who was a brilliant relationship specialist.

JR How so?

MA She was so able to step inside someone else's feelings, thoughts and emotions and try them on herself and then reflect them back. She was a true rapport specialist, someone who understood deeply how to take someone else's point of view. Thus she was able to do some things that, for me, led to deep learning.

One was her capacity to work with family groups where everyone was in turmoil and evaluating each other. She'd create a sculpture

out of their body posture. She'd stop everybody like statues as they were arguing and say, "Just hold your posture" and get mama who was down on her knees with her hands open up towards daddy to hold it and exaggerate it until it looked like she was beseeching the world towards the daddy who was pointing his finger with his growly face and his eyebrows furled, while little brother reached over just at that moment to tease big sister who was snarling in response. She'd stop them and have them all take a look around and say, "Is this what it's like?"

After they saw themselves they couldn't do that anymore, so she had a capacity to turn old judgments into perceptions and when we take something that we hold as a conclusion but turn it into something we can see, then we can change it. On some level she understood that and she began a deep understanding of working with people on a different level.

JR What was Fritz Perles like?

or England, that bring a whole tide of new experience. With that, of course, comes all the superstructure – the clothes, the music, the thought systems, the interest in certain kinds of learning, habitats – everything goes with these streams.

For example, Ikea is found all over the world. And it's not just good marketing. It has to do with people's ideas about what's intelligent design. There's an understanding of intelligence that's shifting, which is also visible in the current onslaught of ideas in the US as two cultural streams collide.

MA What's emerging today is a new focus on what it means to be human and that has evolved into different kinds and styles of learning, especially and including the rise of coaching.

JR What does it mean to be human?

MA Well, that's a really good question. Our ancestors were part of little warring groups that felt only their group was human, much like some of the tribes like the Navaho – the word meant "the

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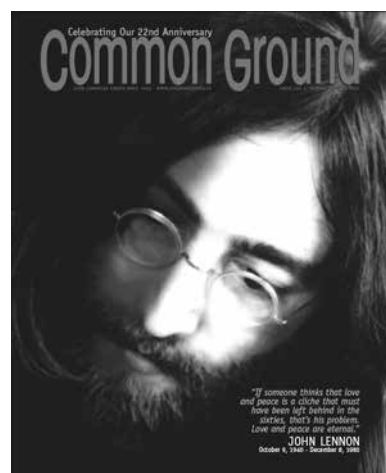
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OUR COVER

Photographer Gerry Deiter caught John Lennon in a reflective moment in 1969. John was touching a Braille watch given to him by a blind child who John had asked, "If you are blind how do you tell the time?" Digital editing in Photoshop by Geoff Olson. Another of Gerry's great photos of the ex-Beatle accompanies Olson's feature article We All Shine On: Remembering John Lennon on the Anniversary of His Death. It's been a long day's night and we have been working like a dog making and unmaking cover designs... but in the end the love you take is equal to the love you make. Peace on Earth and good will to all.



We all shine on

CULTURE

REMEMBERING JOHN LENNON ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

by Geoff Olson

One of the greatest discoveries I ever made as a kid was on a trip to Vancouver, visiting relatives. The pirate treasure in this case was a Beatles record. Back home in Ontario, I had heard the Fab Four's early stuff echoing out from my older sister's bedroom; Love Me Do, Help, Ticket to Ride. But somehow their 1966 album *Magical Mystery Tour* had eluded my ears until the early seventies, when I discovered a cousin's scratchy copy.

A compilation of singles and b-sides, *Magical Mystery Tour* wasn't considered a "real" Beatles album by purists. I didn't know, and I wouldn't have cared if I did. What I recall is watching dust motes drift in a shaft of sunlight in my aunt's living room, while four guys from Liverpool flew me away on a vinyl disc. Penny Lane and Fool on the Hill were terrific; but it was a few of the other songs, the offbeat ones, that really captured my imagination. I had no idea what Strawberry Fields Forever referred to, but I was transported by the song's altered time signature. I Am the Walrus was even more indecipherable, but I delighted in its word salad and leprechaun chorus ("Expert textpert choking smokers, Don't you think the joker laughs at you, Ha ha ha hee hee ho ho").

For a child from the suburbs of Ontario, the album seemed like something from another time, or another world. Too young for the politics of the sixties, I was old enough by the seventies to groove to the music. Lenin-Marxism was for yippies protesting US imperialism; I had discovered Lennon-McCartneyism.

I found that the Beatles songs I liked best were the ones penned mostly by the eldest member. Paul had a fanbase of swooning teen girls, George had his constituency among spiritual-minded introverts and

Ringo had – well, I was never quite sure what constituency Ringo had – but for artists and angry-young-men-in-training, John's caustic humour and cynical smarts made him a very agreeable model.

The Beatles didn't exactly ride the crest of a historical wave. The wave rode through them, and they released its energies through song. And John Lennon was the Big Kahuna, the guy hanging 10 on the roiling breaker of sixties psychedelia. By the time my Beatlemania hit full stride in my late teens, I had discovered *Tomorrow Never Knows* from their 1966 album *Revolver*, in which Lennon sings over a music track played in reverse, while reading lines inspired by the Tibetan Book of the Dead via Timothy Leary. ("Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream / It is not dying...") The song still sounded fresh when covered a decade later by Electronica guru Brian Eno and Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera. It still sounds weirdly timeless...and why not? It's about timelessness, after all.

Speaking of things temporal, Lennon, like all great culture heroes, was both of his time yet transcending it. A talent this prodigious magnifies the possessor in the public eye; and here was a guy who had a mammoth ego to begin with. A sense of immortality clung to his image and music; that's why his death struck so many so sharply. When the Liverpoolian proved to be all too flesh and blood on December 8, 1980, thousands milled about in New

York's Central Park for days afterward, weeping and playing his songs. (As far as celebrity worship goes, only Princess Diana's death in 1997 could compare in public outpouring of grief. Both reactions were likely archetypal in origin. The princess who dies young or falls into a deep sleep is a central theme in fairy tales, whereas Lennon wrote his own myth: a trickster figure whose musical sorcery could command the global imagination, but could not protect him from the obsessive attention of one fan.)

Of all the anecdotes about John Lennon,

Lennon, like all great culture heroes, was both of his time yet transcending it. A talent this prodigious magnifies the possessor in the public eye; and here was a guy who had a mammoth ego to begin with.

my favourite involved the comedy show *Saturday Night Live*. In April of 1976 the show's producer, Lorne Michaels, appeared on national television holding up a cheque made out to the Beatles for \$3,000. All they had to do to claim it was to re-form briefly as a group and per-

form three songs on the show. Michaels probably didn't expect a serious response. But as it turns out, two of the ex-Beatles had struck up a truce of sorts at the time. "Paul and I were together watching that show," Lennon said later in a *Playboy* interview. "He was visiting us at our place in the Dakota. We were watching it and almost went down to the studio, just as a gag. We nearly got into a cab, but we were actually too tired...He and I were just sitting there, watching the show, and we went, 'Ha ha, wouldn't it be funny if we went down? But we didn't.'"

The most striking thing about that

anecdote is the "what if" scenario. Would the choice to appear on SNL have taken Lennon on a different route along fate's garden of forking paths, away from Mark David Chapman?

Lennon's been gone nearly a quarter century, but we still have his music and film clips to remember him by. The man has become something of a cottage industry for his estate, and while some have accused Yoko of a supposedly ghoulish exploitation of her husband's memory, she has actually shown restraint and taste in the licensing of all things Lennon. (When was the last time you heard *Imagine* used to pitch something? In fact, Yoko donated its use to Amnesty International.) I say the more of the man, the better, so his genius is not forgotten by a generation raised on Britney and boy bands. Take for example, *The Beatles Anthology* – an expensive reliquary of image and song, containing rediscovered fragments of St. John. As I type, I'm watching the much-seen clip of the Beatles' recording *All You Need Is Love*. John and his bandmates are in their Sergeant Pepper getups, and flowers and confetti are scattered on the floor of the studio. The guitar-wielding Lennon sits on his stool, wearing granny spectacles and a handlebar mustache, chewing gum as a bugle strikes up the opening bars of *La Marseilles*. Perhaps the opening was meant to cue the audience that this is going to be another anthem – and indeed it was. The song begins with one word repeated over and over: "Love, love, love..." Lennon and McCartney had burned off the boy-meets-girl wrapping of past lyrics. This was a song about the flame itself.

The currency of the word "love" may have been deflated over time by the usual suspects (Hollywood, the greeting card industry, Dr. Laura, et al). But back in the mid-sixties, the Beatles were singing about the real deal. They were first among sixties bands with a song that was about agape

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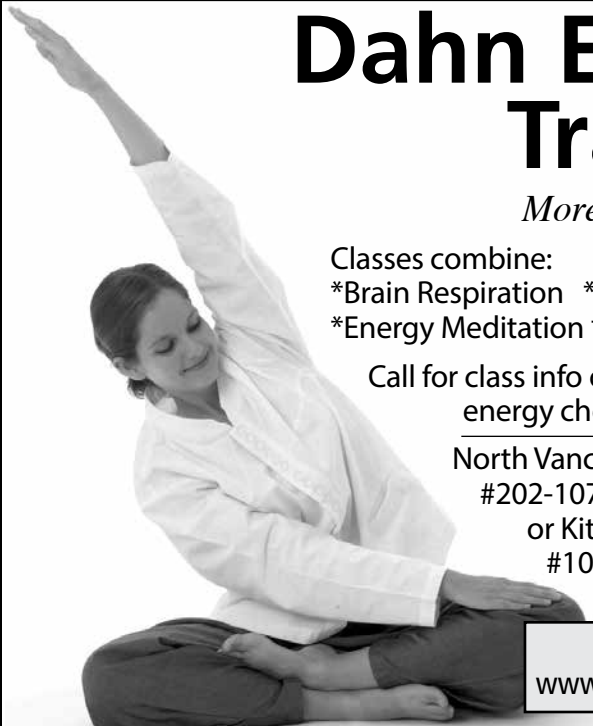
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(love of one for all) rather than eros (love of one for another).

Not all of Lennon's artistic efforts succeeded. Like the trickster figures in all mythologies, the singer/songwriter managed some embarrassing blunders. As the Beatles spiraled into bickering, legal wrangles, and a permanent split, Lennon collaborated with his avant-garde artist wife on the album *Two Virgins*. (I once had the opportunity to hear this effort, which competes with Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music* for sheer unlistenableability. Or perhaps I just didn't get it.)

"The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom," according to William Blake, and Lennon certainly didn't shrink from piloting his submarine-yellow Rolls toward fame's slippery slopes. A messy heroin addiction was accompanied by some questionable career decisions. John went off drugs, annotating the experience in the 1969 howl, *Cold Turkey*, and joined Yoko in exploring Arthur Janov's primal scream therapy. Echoes of his magical misery tour are heard on the brilliant 1971 album *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*. *Mother* is a howl of pain about childhood separation, while *Working Class Hero* is a bitter, clear-eyed remembrance of what most British rockers chose to forget about their beginnings.

Lyrical, Lennon was as unafraid of revealing his dark side as showing his light; and the contrast enabled him to move from the self-loathing pyrotechnics of the *White Album*'s *Yer Blues* to the liminal vulnerability of *Imagine*'s *Jealous Guy*. But what we sometimes forget about the eldest Beatle is that he didn't just sing about peace; he was an active force for it. With millions watching, John and Yoko performed *Give Peace a Chance* live from a Montreal hotel room, joined by such luminaries such as Timothy Leary, Tommy Smothers and Allen Ginsberg. In December of 1972, Lennon recorded *Happy Xmas (War Is Over)* with the Harlem Community Choir. John and Yoko accompanied the song's release with a global scattering of postcards and billboards reading "War Is Over (If You Want It)." The song will be re-released this Dec. 9, the anniversary of its first release and the day after Lennon's death.

Away from Yoko in Los Angeles in the mid-seventies, Lennon spent a "lost weekend" that went on for several months, partying with pals Harry Nilsson and Ringo Starr. Saying goodbye to his wild years for good, he returned to Yoko for a five-year stint as a househusband, raising his son Sean. During that period, the public clamored for his return to music. His fans wanted to know if he still had it. Could the culture hero who brought Promethean fire to the suburbs in the sixties do it all over again in the eighties?

By 1980, Lennon returned from his self-imposed silence with the album *Double Fantasy*. Although the songs were weakened by overproduction, the consensus was that Lennon still had it. Tracks like *Watching the Wheels* and *Woman* were up

there with his finest Beatles work. This was a joint effort from John and Yoko; his tracks alternated with hers on the vinyl album. To avoid Yoko's rather interesting vocal stylings, you had to pick up the needle and move it to the next track. The trickster from Liverpool had done it again.

In interviews from this period, the former Beatle said that his phone was being tapped, and that he was being tailed by black cars he believed were from the FBI. (In October of this year the FBI was ordered to release its files on Lennon within a month's time.) One interpretation of

this alleged interest in the ex-Beatle is that with Reagan newly installed, US policymakers were nervous with Lennon's re-emergence as a public figure, given his previous involve-

ment in the peace movement and various left wing causes a decade earlier. And files reveal there had been a high level interest in Lennon earlier. Some speculate that his 1971 song *John Sinclair* was the spark for the FBI's watch list, eventually leading to the Nixon administration's efforts to deport him. Sinclair was given 10 years in prison for selling two joints to an undercover officer. The song, performed at a benefit for Sinclair, contained the lyrics,

If he'd been a soldier man
Shooting gooks in Vietnam
If he was the CIA
Selling dope and making hay
He'd be free, they'd let him be
Breathing air, like you and me.

More than any one song, it is Lennon's catalogue that empowers the frequent description of him as a genius. In an interview from the time he said, "When real music comes to me – the music of the spheres, the music that surpasses understanding – that has nothing to do with me, 'cause I'm just the channel. The only joy for me is for it to be given to me, and to transcribe it like a medium...those moments are what I live for."

I slipped on some headphones recently to take another listen to *No. 9 Dream*, continued on page 8



photo by Gerry Dieter



John and Yoko's artful Christmas "War is Over, If You Want It" public art is poignant in these times. Common Ground's editor Joseph Roberts, who imagined and coordinated the 1982 Walk for Peace, climbed this billboard in front of the then newly opened Vancouver Public Library in appreciation. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and may peace be with you this blessed New Year. As their song *Happy Xmas* says, "Let's hope it's a good one, Without any fear, War is over, if you want it, War is over now."

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from his "lost-weekend" album, Walls and Bridges. I never quite got this tune, but then it hit me; Lennon is describing a spiritual encounter. He hears a whispering voice call out his name, and feels "sudden hot, sudden cold," as "music touches my soul." Literal or metaphorical? Drug trip, dreamscape, or something else? Whatever he's on about, the lyrics seem to be more than just I Am the Walrus wordplay. Lennon appears to be describing an experience so intimate and strange he can only communicate it in song, asking over and over, "Was it just a dream?" But who better to convey a classic shamanic experience than a real shaman – the type defined by anthropologists

who better to convey a classic shamanic experience than a real shaman – the type defined by anthropologists as the visionary who often doesn't fit in well with the rest of the tribe?

as the visionary who often doesn't fit in well with the rest of the tribe? "I'm not going to change the way I look or the way I feel to conform to anything," Lennon said in his interview with Playboy. "I've always been a freak. So I've been a freak all my life and I have to live with that, you know. I'm one of those people."

Whatever No. 9 Dream means, we have a better angle on the singer/songwriter's intent in the hit single Imagine, from the 1971 album of the same name.

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky

On one level it's a just an exceptionally hummable tune from a former Beatle. On another, it's an unflinching prayer for peace that locks our responsibility for one another firmly in this world. But above all, Imagine is about the primacy of the individual imagination over second-hand belief systems, including those based on exploitation of others:

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man

Imagine became a huge hit. It still gets

more rotation on the radio than any other of the ex-Beatle's solo recordings. In a time when ignorant armies clash on a shared plain of religious fundamentalism, the song has even greater relevance today. But whatever you think of the political or religious sentiments, the central message is clear: think and feel for yourself, don't allow anyone to do your imagining for you – including some hirsute character with little round spectacles. The singer/songwriter rejected all gurus, all isms, including the hagiography that surrounded himself and his bandmates. St. John was actually no saint at all, and Lennon himself was the first to say so (see sidebar). He was a flawed human being like all the rest of us, doing his best

to figure out the world and his place in it.

"It's quite possible to do anything, but not to put it on the leaders and the parking meters," the animated Liverpudlian told interviewer David Sheff shortly before his death. "You have to do it yourself. That's what the great masters and mistresses have been saying ever since time began. They can point the way, leave signposts and little instructions in various books that are now called holy and worshiped for the cover of the book and not for what it says, but the instructions are all there for all to see, have always been and always will be. There's nothing new under the sun. All the roads lead to Rome. And people cannot provide it for you. I can't wake you up. You can wake you up. I can't cure you. You can cure you."

This wasn't just some forgettable sentiment about positive self-esteem or personal power. It echoes a previous message attributed to another longhaired peace freak:

"the kingdom of heaven is within you." And that, my friends, is why John Lennon's most memorable songs still move us, young and old – because they strike that deepest chord, the beauty within us all.

Well we all shine on
Like the moon and the stars and the sun
Yeah we all shine on
Come on! – Instant Karma

LENNON IN QUOTES

"I don't intend to be a performing flea any more. I was the dream weaver, but although I'll be around I don't intend to be running at 20,000 miles an hour trying to prove myself. I don't want to die at 40."

"I used to be cruel to my woman, and physically – any woman. I was a hitter. I couldn't express myself and I hit. I fought men and I hit women. That is why I am always on about peace, you see. It is the most violent people who go for love and peace."

"Everything's the opposite. But I sincerely believe in love and peace. I am a violent man who has learned not to be violent and regrets his violence. I will have to be a lot older before I can face in public how I treated women as a youngster."

"My defences were so great. The cocky rock and roll hero who knows all the answers was actually a terrified guy who didn't know how to cry. Simple."

"Part of me suspects that I'm a loser, and the other part of me thinks I'm God Almighty."

"People always got the image I was an anti-Christ or antireligion. I'm not. I'm a most religious fellow. I was brought up a Christian and I only now understand some of the things that Christ was saying in those parables. Because people got hooked on the teacher and missed the message. All this bit about electing a president. We pick our own daddy out of a dog pound of daddies."

"I believe in God, but not as one thing, not as an old man in the sky. I believe that what people call God is something in all of us. I believe that what Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha and all the rest said was right. It's just that the translations have gone wrong."

"You can't cheat kids. If you cheat them when they're children they'll make you pay when they're 16 or 17 by revolting against you or hating you or all those so-called teenage problems. I think that's finally when they're old enough to stand up to you and say, 'what a hypocrite you've been all this time. You've never given me what I really wanted, which is you.'"

"Our society is run by insane people for insane objectives. I think we're being run by maniacs for maniacal ends and I think I'm liable to be put away as insane for expressing that. That's what's insane about it."

"I think the basic thing nobody asks is why do people take drugs of any sort? And that question has to be resolved before you can think, well, what can we do for the poor drug addict? Why do we have to have these accessories to normal living to live? I mean, is there something wrong with society that's making us so pressurized, that we cannot live without guarding ourselves against it?"

"The only time we took drugs was when we were without hope and the only way we got out of it was with hope and if we can sustain the hope then we don't need drugs, liquor or anything. But if we lose hope, what can you do? What is there to do?"

"We've got this gift of love, but love is like a precious plant. You can't just accept it and leave it in the cupboard or just think it's going to get on by itself. You've got to keep watering it. You've got to really look after it and nurture it."

"When you're drowning, you don't say 'I would be incredibly pleased if someone would have the foresight to notice me drowning and come and help me,' you just scream."

"You have to be a bastard to make it, and that's a fact. And the Beatles are the biggest bastards on Earth."

"Now, in the sixties we were naive, like children. Everybody went back to their rooms, and said, 'We didn't get a wonderful world of just flowers and peace and happy chocolate, and it won't be just pretty and beautiful all the time,' and just like babies everyone went back to their rooms and sulked. 'We're going to stay in our rooms and play rock and roll and not do anything else, because the world's a horrible place, because it didn't give us everything we cried for.' Right?...well, crying for it wasn't enough. The thing the sixties did was show us the possibilities and the responsibility that we all had. It wasn't the answer. It just gave us a glimpse of the possibility."

"Reality leaves a lot to the imagination."

"You're just left with yourself all the time, whatever you do anyway. You've got to get down to your own God in your own temple. It's all down to you, mate."

"Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans."

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We were made for times like these

by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, PhD

My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. I have heard from so many recently who are deeply and properly bewildered. They are concerned about the state of affairs in our world right now.

Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and often-righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people.

You are right in your assessments. The luster and hubris some have aspired to while endorsing acts so heinous against children, elders, everyday people, the poor, the unguarded, the helpless, is breathtaking. Yet, I urge you, ask you, gentle you, to please not spend your spirit dry by bewailing these difficult times. Especially do not lose hope.

Most particularly because, the fact is that we were made for these times. Yes. For years, we have been learning, practising, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement.

I grew up on the Great Lakes and recognize a seaworthy vessel when I see one. Regarding awakened souls, there have never been more able vessels in the waters than there are right now across the world. And they are fully provisioned and able

to signal one another as never before in the history of humankind. Look out over the prow; there are millions of boats of righteous souls on the waters with you. Even though your veneers may shiver from every wave in this stormy roil, I assure you that the long timbers composing your prow and rudder come from a greater forest. That long-grained lumber is known to withstand storms, to hold together, to hold its own, and to advance, regardless.

In any dark time, there is a tendency to veer toward fainting over how much is wrong or unmended in the world. Do not focus on that. There is a tendency too to fall into being weakened by dwelling on what is outside your reach, by what cannot yet be. Do not focus there. That is spending the wind without raising the sails. We are needed, that is all we can know. And though we meet resistance, we more so will meet great souls who will hail us, love us and guide us, and we will know them when they appear. Didn't you say you were a believer? Didn't you say you pledged to listen to a voice greater? Didn't you ask for grace? Don't you remember that to be in grace means to submit to the voice greater?

In any dark time, there is a tendency to veer toward fainting over how much is wrong in the world. Do not focus on that... We are needed, that is all we can know. And though we meet resistance, we more so will meet great souls....

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take "everyone on Earth" to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires, causes proper matters to catch fire. To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like these – to be fierce and to show mercy toward others, both, are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity. Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show

it. If you would help to calm the tumult, this is one of the strongest things you can do.

There will always be times when you feel discouraged. I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it; I will not entertain it. It is not allowed to eat from my plate.

The reason is this:

In my uttermost bones I know something, as do you. It is that there can be no despair when you remember why you came to Earth, who you serve, and who sent you here. The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours: They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here. In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbour and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.

This comes with much love and a prayer that you remember who you came from and why you came to this beautiful, needful Earth.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes wrote the best seller *Women Who Run With the Wolves* www.mavenproductions.com/estes.html



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Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul

Book review by Geoff Olson

Tony Hendra's spiritual memoir starts off with a literal bang, as he recalls having an affair with a married woman at the age of 14. When the husband, a devout Catholic, discovers the two embracing in his kitchen, he hauls off Tony to the one man he believes can save the young fornicator's soul: Father Joe.

At first glance, Dom Joseph Warrilow, who had lived all his adult life in a Benedictine monastery on the Isle of Wight, looked less like a saviour than a friar rendered by Warner Brothers. He had "big pink hands likerocklobsters sticking out from frayed black cuffs...a fleshy triangular nose...gigantic ears, wings of gristle, at right angles to the rather pointy, close-shaven skull. The long rubbery lips were stretched in the goofiest of grins."

To paraphrase Waterboys singer Mike Scott, it was a wonderful disguise. Underneath the cartoon countenance was faith's real deal. Father Joe, no "Cathaholic" addicted to dogma, was radiant rather than wrathful, and offered Hendra guidance rather than guilt.

As a teen, Hendra had all sorts of mad enthusiasms, most of which only lasted a few weeks, usually due to the reality principle of no money or mentors. "I'd been an astronomer, archeologist, research chemist, brewer and vintner, race car mechanic, minimalist poet (twice), numismatist, lepidopterist, reporter, concert pianist, angler, munitions expert, operatic tenor, Olympic track and field star, lumberjack and spelunker...Like all my other teen dreams, the new identity was like a tailor's fitting as I turned this way and that to see how it looked in the mirror of self-consciousness."

Hendra was searching for the one guise that would trump the rest.

The teen abandoned his identity as adulterer after a terrified introduction to what turned out to be the benignly smiling Father Joe. So impressed was Hendra by Joe's Christ-like response to sin, that he now had a real model to emulate. He sums it up with the line, "I Was a Teenage Monk."

Pursuing a monk's path seemed a bizarre career path for a teenage boy in the early sixties. His schoolboy chums preferred the culture of rebellion and musical protest: "To them, Peter, Paul and

Mary meant folk. To me it meant the two top apostles and the Mother of Christ... They were eyeing the emerging schism between Mod and Rocker and wondering

which way to jump in the crucial matter of hair; I couldn't wait to shave a bald spot in mine."

Some of these schoolboy associates went on to become well-known public figures such as cosmologist Fred Hoyle and an "inarticulate homunculus named Stephen Hawking." The great utility of Hawking to his classmates, Hendra writes, was his speed-of-light understanding of math and physics. "He usually had the homework finished by the end of lunch

hour, and the thuggier elements in his class—including me—found it easy to per-

suade him to share it. Our math and physics marks were terrific, until the inevitable day of the test, which Hawking finished in minutes and sat snuffing and grinning for the remainder of the hour, while the rest of us sweated through the now incomprehensible scientific runes."

His enthusiasm for the monastic life was eventually abandoned for a comedic one. Hendra traded prayer for laughter; joining The Cambridge Footlights, he was soon hanging out with future Python alumni like John Cleese and Graham Chapman. Relocating to the US, the might-have-been-monk became an editor of the humour magazine National Lampoon, and struck up friendships with the Saturday Night Live and Second City crowd. Hendra's talent as a satirist was in high demand; by the eighties he was editor of the irony-on-steroids Spymagazine, and starred in the musical mock-doc This Is Spinal Tap. Drugs, debauchery, and doubt accompanied his worldly journey,

but the soul-searching correspondence and occasional meetings with Father Joe never ceased.

Father Joe remained a rock in Hendra's storm-tossed life, responding to his questions on life, war, God, sex and sin with a Socratic wit and a loving concern. What makes Hendra's spiritual memoir so appealing is that Father Joe comes across on the page as an enlightened presence: a nonjudgmental soul of great compassion. In a time when Catholicism's darker side is getting a well-deserved caning, Hendra's book is both a benediction and a caution; we're reminded that every organized religion has both its asses and its assets.

Hendra himself comes off less admirably than Father Joe. But as brutally honest as this memoir is—and it is beautifully written—it's been condemned as a halfway measure in the auto-flagellation department. Upon publication, Hendra's 30-year-old daughter accused her father of sexual abuse. If this is more than familial opportunism, it raises the question whether a piece of literature should be judged by the same standards as the author. Is Hendra's memoir retrospectively damned by the hand that wrote it?

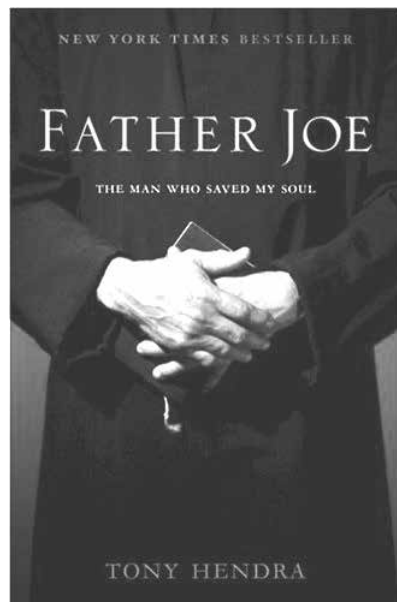
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(I'm reminded of one of my favourite authors, Arthur Koestler. Once the equal to George Orwell as a political essayist and thinker, the Hungarian author was outed several years ago by biographer David Cesarini as a violent alcoholic and serial rapist.)

Whether such accusations stick or not, Father Joe remains a glowing presence in these pages. The comic-looking cleric strikes the reader as one of the less objectionable birds in the aviary of organized religion: one who gives wings to others by word and deed. If Hendra ultimately fails to live up fully to Father Joe's wit, warmth and wisdom, he still manages to lyrically convey the

soulfulness that went into the old bird's efforts.

Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul, Tony Hendra, Random House, \$35.95. Vancouver writer and political cartoonist Geoff Olson can be reached at gefo@telus.net



Invisible Acts of Power

PERSONAL CHOICES THAT CREATE MIRACLES

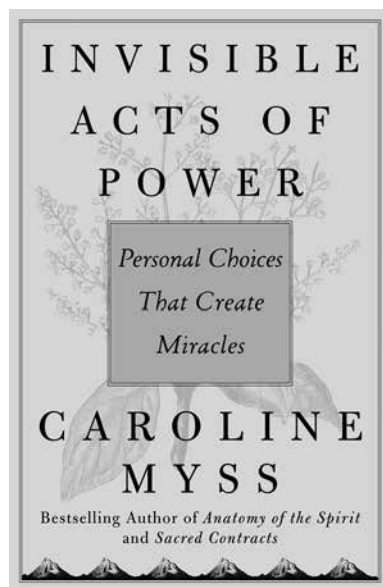
Book review by Tony Jordan

I shall pass through this world but once.
If therefore, there be any kindness I can
show, or any good thing I can do, let me do
it now...for I shall not pass this way again.
- Etienne de Grellet

Author and intuitive Caroline Myss in her latest book speaks to the simple gift of giving with stories from her email request to tell of invisible acts of power. Myss opens her book with tales of loss and redemption.

She was inspired by a tattooed and pierced young man who unexpectedly helped a struggling older woman lift heavy boxes. This act of invisible power transformed Myss and so began her latest book of "creating miracles" by chronicling acts of healing, loving kindness.

A nurse recounts how her faith was restored during the lowest ebb of her life, after divorce and the tragic loss of her teenage son. Her supervisor said, "I am going to believe in you until you believe



in yourself," rather than dismissing her during a life crisis.

A rookie police officer gives a homeless

man \$1.25 and finds out months later that her act of kindness has transformed his shattered life. A stranger who refuses aid to a hungry man finds her take-out food spoiled by evening. A mother who lost her child to AIDS reaches out to another grieving mother and communicates an unspoken understanding of mutual loss.

Healers quietly reside in all of us, says Myss. She retells her tale of healing while boarding a plane: Struggling with a long-term back problem, Myss is unable to lift her heavy luggage. A burly fellow traveler easily tosses her bag up into the storage bay.

A rookie police officer gives a homeless man \$1.25 and finds out months later that her act of kindness has transformed his shattered life.

Page after page is filled with endearing tales of healing, interwoven from the perspective of the giver and receiver. Each person transformed.

Miracle meals delivered to a single mother with hungry children during the holidays. Anonymous strangers drop off money to those in dire need. Myss joyfully weaves her message of faith, spirit and hope. Exquisitely simple in its heart message, Invisible Acts of Power is a rare gem for dark times.

Myss reminds us of our necessity to contribute at any level, be it miniscule or grand with the universal gesture of giving. We can all be billionaires of kindness. That our humanity is woven together, sometimes tenuously, with an invisible thread of love, made strong by action and care. Myss reminds us that Earth angels are amongst us: tattooed, burly, gruff, gentle, kind and unexpected.

Caroline Myss lives in Chicago, Illinois. Invisible Acts of Power, 2004, \$35, Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster www.myss.com

Tony Jordan, who works for Finlandia Pharmacy in Vancouver, looks for seeds of hope daily etonyjordan@yahoo.com

It's the Crude, Dude

Book review by Ralph Maud

I didn't myself think that the Iraq invasion was oil. I thought it was new-fangled ideology about US world domination along with old-fashioned cronism in at the spoils. I imagined the US could always buy oil on the open market. Why would it have to invade to get it?

But Linda McQuaig is very persuasive. There is no writer of greater persuasive prose in the world today. She came within a hair of convincing me that oil is the overwhelming motive for the Iraq invasion. It's the difference between buying oil and controlling oil supply.

She goes back to J.D. Rockefeller and his lust to monopolize US oil production:

If there is one thing that stands out in the history of the rise of Standard Oil, it is how Rockefeller never hesitated to lie, cheat or toss aside any code of fair play or common decency—not to mention observance of the law—in his efforts to eliminate all competition (p. 169).

And with much evidence McQuaig shows that Big Oil has been bullying in a like fashion ever since, and on an international scale with the aid of the US government. Mohammad Mossadegh, the popular prime minister of Iran, was gotten rid of because he nationalized the oil industry.

He was replaced by the US sponsored Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

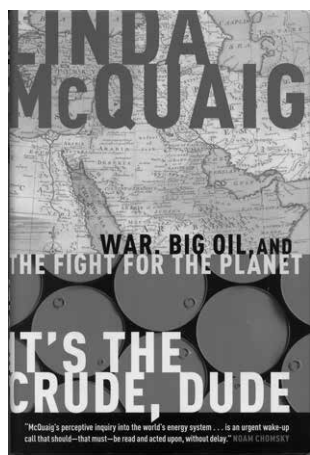
Exxon was given free rein to set up a monopoly situation in Saudi Arabia. The Big Oil/CIA leverage on Iraq goes back a

long way. And McQuaig scoffs at the idea that it's just coincidence that the current administration's first attempts to impose "democracy" on countries should be on countries crucial to US oil strategy.

I was totally swayed by McQuaig until the latest news report from the interim Iraqi government that it is "currently conducting talks with an Irish company, Petrel, to refurbish and develop oil installations around Kirkuk and

Tikrit." This is in keeping with the decision that "the state-owned Iraqi National Oil Co. will maintain the ownership of existing assets" while "new activity" will go to the private sector. But Petrel I have never heard of. Where is Big Oil? There's no mention of Exxon. The US fights a war and Exxon gets bumped by this Irish group? Begorrah!

Linda McQuaig's book It's the Crude, Dude: War, Big Oil and the Fight for the Planet is published by Doubleday Canada 2004, \$35.95. Ralph Maud is a Simon Fraser University professor emeritus of English.





Growing into soul

UNIVERSE WITHIN

by Gwen Randall-Young

We are an evolving species, and one can easily recognize the physical changes that have occurred since humans began to walk this Earth. Changes in our abilities, and how we think are equally evident. One only needs to observe a six year old who is adept at using the computer to observe the dizzying rate at which humans adapt to technology, and how technology changes our thinking.

We are on the threshold of another evolutionary shift, one that is critical to our survival both as individuals, and as a species.

In my new book, *Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution*, I explain what this shift entails, and how we can consciously choose to step up to the next level. Following are excerpts from the book with more to come in the new year.

~

Almost 30 years ago Jonas Salk wrote a book called *Survival of the Wisest*, in which he argued that in order for the human species to survive and thrive in the second half of its growth curve, there would have to be a shift in values and perspectives. Wisdom would overtake physical strength as the primary predictor of evolutionary

endurance, for both the individual and the species. This would mark a major evolutionary shift.

That shift has begun, and its tremors will touch us all. Findings of quantum physics suggest a cosmic intelligence at the core of the universe: the substrate from which all else manifests. Through human consciousness, the universe can reflect upon itself for the first time. Each individual has access to pure perception or insight, but, according to physicist David Bohm, our low level of ego development deflects that insight.

What is required to access this insight, or wisdom, is the ability to transcend our own egos. Only then may we tap into, and become expressions of that underlying order which exists everywhere, including within our own DNA.

Cosmic intelligence is the energy that

pulsates through the outer regions of the universe, and the inner reaches of individual consciousness. Its human expression is soul.

The goal of this quest is no longer simply esoteric "enlightenment." Modern

science demonstrates the impact of our thoughts on every level of physical and mental health. Simply put, ego-based thoughts and behaviours are ultimately detrimental. The negative effects extend to physical health, interpersonal relationships and consequently, individual and collective well being.

Science is revealing startling evidence of the effects of a more soul-based perspective at the level of cells, bio-chemicals and electrical impulses within the body. Thoughts and behaviours aligned with soul contribute positively to health and

Through human consciousness, the universe can reflect upon itself for the first time. Each individual has access to... insight, but, according to physicist David Bohm, our low level of ego development deflects that insight.

happiness; consequently, they are "pro-evolutionary."

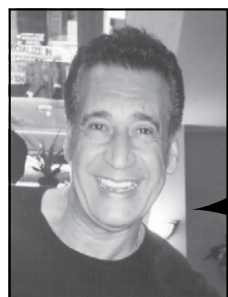
Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution is a guide to navigating this evolutionary transition. There has recently been a great shift towards an awareness of the collective consciousness; millions are seeking to appease their spiritual hunger and connect with soul.

While many are becoming increasingly familiar with these spiritual ideas on a conceptual level, they still struggle to integrate them into "real life," applying them consistently in day-to-day living. Making the shift is difficult.

As David Bohm says, the collectivity does not yet have "the energy to reach the whole, to put it all on fire." The purpose of this book is to ignite within every reader the energy and intelligence to make this evolutionary shift.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice and a feature columnist for *Common Ground* magazine. Her books and tapes are available at www.gwen.ca, or contact her at gwendall@shaw.ca. They may also be ordered through Banyen Books.

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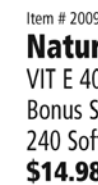
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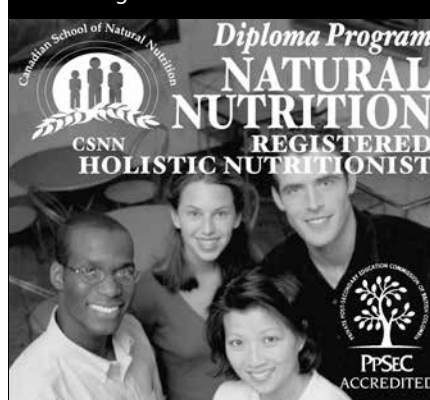
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My journey

SIMPLY...WOMAN!

by Crystal Andrus

Like many people I stumbled upon success, never having planned to design a life-management program or write a weight-loss book. In my early twenties I managed a chain of health clubs, competed in fitness shows like Ms. Galaxy, appeared in magazines and on television and taught aerobics. By most standards I had a great life. With long blonde hair, a great physique, and a climbing career I appeared to be successful and happy. But I always felt like something was missing. I was always striving for the next goal, never enjoying or even acknowledging the one I'd just accomplished.

Being fit was all about the outside image and I was hard on myself. I put myself on insanely strict diet and exercise regimens for a few months and then once I was in shape would eat whatever I wanted and stop exercising. When I started to gain a few pounds, I'd start my cycle all over again. There was absolutely no balance in my life.

After a few years I grew increasingly frustrated with the fitness circuit. I decided that maybe marriage and babies would make me happier. Because I did everything with fierce determination, within no time I was married and pregnant with my first daughter. I was sure this "new life" would soon make me happy.

Pregnancy was the perfect excuse to eat what I wanted and gain weight without anybody judging me. I craved greasy cheeseburgers and ate them almost every day. My weight started to climb but I didn't care. I was sick of being so body beautiful. Eventually I quit my job and gave up exercising. No longer a career woman, I intended to be the perfect homemaker. With immaculate floors and homemade bread, I was adamant about doing this job impeccably.

Weighing close to 200 pounds when my first daughter was born, I never imagined that gaining weight could so profoundly affect my life. I had never lived as a heavy person before or experienced the world through this larger body. It may sound shallow or trivial but I learned first hand that life is incredibly different when you are not thin and beautiful. But, I loved my baby and I tried to convince myself that it no longer mattered how I looked.

Within a year, I was pregnant again. With two healthy daughters, a committed husband and a beautiful home, I should have been happy, yet all I could focus on was my weight. I was

tired, lonely, and searching for something more, so I ate comfort food and watched Oprah.

My breaking point finally came one night as I sat cuddled up in my rocking chair nursing my baby. I realized that I didn't even know who I was or what I wanted for my life. Looking down at my precious child and thinking of my sleeping two-year-old, I realized I was cheating them. I was no longer that dynamic,

positive woman I had once been. It was time I treated myself with more respect and showed them that life was all about choices.



The next morning I dragged myself out of bed and headed out to run while everyone else slept. I stopped several times, heaving for breath. Shocked at how out of shape I was, halfway down

the road I turned around and walked back. But, I began demanding more for my life and refused to find comfort in a bag of potato chips. I realized that I was the only one who could give myself love, validation and worth. Instead of waiting for permission to live, I did what I loved without compromising my values or beliefs. Within six months, I was running 10 kilometres, five or six days a week and I weighed in at 121 pounds.

I have discovered that the process of taking care of yourself, being comfortable in your own skin and demanding more from your life opens the door to joy. Living with passion and following your life path is the most effective weight-loss aid available to mankind. In fact, I sometimes wonder if my message to women is even about weight loss at all.

Crystal Andrus is a popular Canadian fitness expert and motivational speaker. This article is the first in a 12-part series. www.simplywoman.com

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Agricultural dictatorship in Iraq

THE ORGANIC WAY

by Marya Skrypiczajko

Economic imperialism of the worst kind has hit Iraq with transgenic crops being forced on the population. Saving seed as a tradition and a necessary way of life for Iraq's farmers and subsistence gardeners has been outlawed.

For thousands of years, farmers have saved the seeds of one year's crops to be planted the following year. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, in 2002, 97 percent of Iraqi farmers used seeds saved from the previous year's harvest. They have also bred natural varieties of crops, particularly wheat, barley and dates, to be better suited to their particular climate zones.

This fundamentally natural approach to farming has been a cornerstone of their agricultural system; it has preserved their agricultural heritage and been an economic necessity. Now that's all changed as a new patent law enacted by the US does not allow Iraqi farmers to save their own seed and forces them to buy seed from government-approved seed companies.

During the US occupation of Iraq, administrator Paul Bremer decreed 100 orders pertaining to Iraq's economic, political and social future. These orders are now in place until revised or repealed by a new Iraqi regime. Since the new Iraqi government is tied to the US government, it is not expected to be revising Bremer's orders any time soon.

Order 81 is a new patent law that includes a chapter on plant variety protection. The

gist of this chapter is that Iraqi farmers are now only allowed to plant "protected" crop varieties defined as new, distinct, uniform and stable. The heritage seeds Iraqi farmers have been saving since the time of Babylon do not meet these criteria; those that do are products of multi-national seed companies and include transgenic seeds. In addition, this order gives plant breeders that claim to have discovered the new varieties the exclusive rights to all production and sales of the "protected" varieties in seed and harvested plant form.

This monopoly will last 20 years for crop varieties and 25 for trees and vines. Basically, it gives the large biotech companies control over Iraq's seed trade and thus, a significant part of their agricultural system. Furthermore, it forces Iraqi farmers to become dependant on these companies. These amendments are not at all in line with Iraq's previous patent law, which prohibited private ownership of biological resources.

This will affect those of us outside of Iraq too. If the biotech companies introduce GE wheat in Iraq, it will spread worldwide over time; transgenic pollution will contaminate regular wheat and related crops because pollen transfer cannot be controlled. Transfer of unwanted genetic

material from transgenic canola and corn for instance is out of control in producing countries where "clean" certified seed is no longer available.

In Iraq, all this is being touted as "agricultural reconstruction." The officials who enacted this law claim it is to ensure Iraq has a steady supply of good quality seeds and to make it easier for it to become a member of the WTO. They then tie this in to their goal of claiming to help better feed the citizens of Iraq.

Hmmm. Iraqi farmers previously used seeds they had specifically designed for their growing conditions. North American and European members of the WTO do not have to abide by similar restrictions on seed use. Hunger has so far not been solved in any other underprivileged country by corporate control of that country's seed market.

It seems clear that this is actually about the control and commercialization of Iraq's agriculture system, not about helping the Iraqi people.

It is no coincidence that the US agriculture department, which aided Bremer in writing Order 81, was headed by ex-management of the huge US seed and biotech companies, such as Monsanto and Cargill. Ann Veneman, who recently resigned as US secretary of agriculture, had a long

career working for large US agribusinesses before going to work for the government. So did Dan Amstutz who headed Iraq's agricultural reconstruction.

Sadly, Iraq is not the first country to have to deal with this sort of totalitarian tragedy. Variations on the situation have already taken place in other poor countries that rely on aid from wealthier countries: Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Cambodia are a few. Never do these regulations reflect the will of the local people.

While it is true that Iraq was not the most agriculturally efficient country before the US invasion, this dictatorship-style approach is no way to improve the situation. It simply puts the power into corporate hands and puts the farmers into a poorer situation. After years of suffering through a trade embargo, Iraq needs access to new machinery, as well as funding and management advice. It also needs to continue to build on the work farmers have already done breeding crops appropriate to their climate. And on a moral level, Iraqis simply need the right to make their own decisions about food and agricultural policies. Without any of these, the Iraqi people will never be free and never be able to feed themselves.

Marya Skrypiczajko is the author of *BC the Organic Way – Where to Find Organic Food in British Columbia*. For more visit www.bctheorganicway.com



Personally-collected seeds become illegal

Mrs Schmeiser sues Monsanto for \$140

by A.B. Hansen

Monsanto was nervous before the Supreme Court of Canada narrowly decided in May that Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser infringed its copyright on transgenic canola. Company officials thought they could relax after what they considered a big win.

Now that decision may come back to haunt them. A keystone of Monsanto's argument in the case revolved around the fact that Percy did not notify the company when he suspected that its Roundup ready canola, which he was not licensed to grow, had found its way into his fields. It is believed to have arrived both as pollen and been dropped by trucks driving past the Schmeiser fields.

In 2002, Louise Schmeiser found Monsanto's canola in her organic vegetable garden and shelterbelt. Louise sent several letters to Monsanto to come and remove its transgenic plants, exactly what

the company told the Supreme Court that Percy should have done to have prevented a lawsuit against him.

Monsanto responded by sending Mrs. Schmeiser a letter demanding that she stop harassing the company. Louise then paid several students to remove the plants from her garden and burn them.

Wishing to be compensated for her \$140 expenditure and to prove a point, Mrs. Schmeiser then filed a small claims action against Monsanto. By now the company was getting really nervous that it might be ordered to pay the well-documented claim and its lawyers stalled for time.

Louise Schmeiser found Monsanto's canola in her organic vegetable garden and shelterbelt. Louise sent several letters to Monsanto to come and remove its transgenic plants

The matter could be settled as soon as next March, but if the Schmeisers win this case an important precedent

will be set. Since it has now been shown that genetic pollution is a serious problem and that all transgenics can be traced back to its developers, removal of unwanted plants could be a hugely expensive enterprise.

On the Canadian Prairies, transgenic canola of three types are outcrossing in farmers' fields with non-GE canola as well as with each other. Some plants are now resistant to three brands of herbicide from three companies and much more powerful

herbicides are being used to kill unwanted canola plants.

Parliament has yet to act on recommendations of the country's top court, which said that the Patent Act should not be applied to plants, the Plant Breeder's Rights Act should.

Where this goes is anybody's guess as Prime Minister Martin is under pressure to appease the US. There are powerful lobby groups in Washington wanting Canada to roll over on resistance to transgenics and prevent things like mandatory labeling laws.

For more on the Schmeiser family's GE nightmare see www.percyschmeiser.com. In a related case the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate is suing Monsanto for loss of income due to an inability to grow organic canola because of transgenic pollution www.saskorganic.com



Dietary dilemmas

NUTRISPEAK

by Vesanto Melina MS, RD

Will you share holiday meals with family and friends who range from turkey-loving carnivores through vegetarians, vegans or raw foodists? With such diverse tastes to satisfy, creating a festive menu presents a challenge. Here's a typical scenario, plus a few possible solutions.

Each year, a different member of your family takes a turn in hosting the big holiday meal. This will be your first year as a vegetarian host. Your brother has informed you that he expects the traditional turkey dinner. Your sister is trying to cut her family's intake of saturated fat and cholesterol; furthermore, she hopes to avoid her past pattern of gaining a few pounds during the holidays. You don't want to cook a turkey. Yet you want to have a pleasant and fun-filled celebration. You decide to:

a) Give in and cook a turkey.

b) Tell your guests that you aren't comfortable cooking a turkey, but you are happy to prepare other foods and have one of them bring turkey.

c) Refuse to have turkey in your house. Tell them that they can cook what they like when it's their turn, and you'll do what you want when it's your turn.

d) This year, enjoy a celebration that is not solely centred on food.

e) Escape to Mexico or Hawaii.

Note that there are no right or wrong answers to this dilemma. Different solutions suit different people, or work for the same person at one or another time in life. With each choice, what are possible outcomes?

a) Roast a turkey:

It's important to respect others' traditions and beliefs. Yet your values are no less important. Diplomacy is the fine art of honouring your own ethical principles and social consciousness without judging, condemning or otherwise injuring another person. It is highly dependent on effective communication and could involve some soul searching. This may be a year when you discuss what really matters to those involved, listen well, and become much closer to those you love, regardless of the meal.

b) Have someone else bring a turkey:

This solution works for many people. You don't have to cook a turkey, yet your brother gets his traditional favourite. You can prepare a big stuffed squash and gravy (see recipe in last month's Common Ground), a nut loaf, or an "unturkey" (from Capers or Choices). Add cranberry sauce, a gorgeous salad, side dishes of veggies and desserts. The vegetarian dishes often become the more popular items in the feast. After sharing a banquet table that includes vegetarian and non-vegetarian food for a few years, the attitudes of many family members toward vegetarian

foods change, and new solutions become possible.

c) No turkey in your house:

Sometimes it isn't what you say that creates a problem; it's how you say it. For one person, gathering around a turkey is linked to happy traditions and memories; for another it is an outdated ritual derived from barbaric sacrifices and cruel farming practices. The words you choose to share your perspectives can convey a message of judgment and create tension and distance. Alternatively, you may be able to communicate while building a bridge at

the same time. People tend to be open to hearing your reasons for being vegetarian (compassion for animals, concern for the environment or health) when they also sense your compassion for them. Keep your caring at the forefront, take the time to talk, and recall how long your dietary changes took to evolve.

d) Celebrate in a different, healthier way.

This is another solution for those who do choose not to host a turkey dinner. There are many ways to enjoy family and friends apart from stuffing yourselves to the point of discomfort (which is a typical holiday scenario for many people). You can offer a games night at your home and serve delicious appetizers and baking. You could begin new, healthy traditions such as a day of skiing, a skating party, or a winter walk through your favourite park. Precede

the event by brunch or follow it by an evening of hearty snacks and desserts.

e) Escape to sunnier climates.

Flying off to relax on the beach can solve the immediate problem. And while you're enjoying the sun, you can ponder your options for future family gatherings.

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian, internationally known speaker and consultant, based near Fort Langley. She is author of seven books including the new Food Allergy Survival Guide. In *Becoming Vegetarian* and *Becoming Vegan* (co-authored with Brenda Davis), the chapters on dietary diplomacy are among favourites with readers. For consultations, call Fort Integrated Health Clinic at 604-888-8325 or her home office at 604-882-6782. Vesanto's website is www.nutrispeak.com



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Modern "temples" drown ancient gods

FILMS WORTH WATCHING

by Robert Alstead

When the Grand Coulee dam was completed on the Columbia River in 1942, it was the largest dam in the world and held up as a marvel of US engineering power and prowess. Woody Guthrie even sang a song about the "greatest wonder of the world" at the opening ceremony.

As with subsequent big dam projects in the States and this side of the border, the economic benefits that were trumpeted to the electrified rooftops, eclipsed the plight of the displaced peoples, often indigenous, or the prime farmland, forests, ecosystems and the salmon runs that would be ruined in the process.

If the true cost of big dams is now sinking in here, the old-style, mega-is-best mentality is still mesmerizing governments in rising economic powerhouses like China and India.

Drowned Out is a jam-packed DVD documentary about one such project, the huge Sardar Sarovar dam project in India and the plight of the adivasis, indigenous tribal farmers, whose ancestral lands have been submerged.

McLibel filmmaker Franny Armstrong picked up a DV camera and a solar power pack and journeyed to the lush, valley village of Jalsindhi in Madhya Pradesh. There she stayed with healer Luhariya Sonkaria and his young family in their village hut, the lowest on the riverside, and documented their struggle against political indifference and the rising waters of the Narmada River.

The DVD, which includes the 75-minute feature and a 15 minute update, shot for PBS television earlier this year, charts the history of the Sardar Sarovar project from when the late prime minister Nehru laid the foundation stone in 1961 up until April of this year when rising waters forced the family to abandon their home and move higher up the slopes. Nehru's view that dams are "temples of modern India," quoted in school textbooks, is particularly ironic when you see temples and the ancestral lands, which the adivasis believe are inhabited by gods, disappearing under the floodwaters.

Armstrong gives ample space to the official explanation of why Sardar Sarovar, the keystone in a staircase of 3,000 dams, must be built. We hear an ebullient dam engineer, for whom the project has become a matter of national pride and self-satisfied irrigation minister Jay Narayan Vyas, wax about how poor, drought-ridden regions will soon have water and power. Vyas even refers to the dam and its 75,000-kilometre canal system as a "wonder of the world."

But if the politicians haven't learned from experience, the people have. "There's a lot of money in poverty," says author and longtime protester, Arundhati Roy, and, as the film reveals, the real beneficiaries are the industrialists.

Faced with a stark choice between meagre cash compensation or poor unfarmable land, the adivasis choose to stay with their waterlogged homes. They need to farm to survive and, as the sweet-natured Luhariya says, they would rather drown with their homes than take cash. A visit to a squalid city slum shows why: a family of nine, displaced by another dam, is shown living in misery off a dollar a day earned in manual labour. Worse still is the sense of loss in the father's words. "I still belong to my village," he says, even though it is at the bottom of a lake.

The hope that arises from this situation is in the way that the farmers led by activist Medha Patkar rally together to form the powerful grassroots Save the Narmada movement, challenging the government to honour its promises all along the way.

We see Patkar leading hunger strikers in the 1990s, which caused the World Bank to withdraw from the dam project. Hugh Brody of the original World Bank review team said it found the construction and the resettlement plan "alarming" and "severely flawed" from its initiation.

When the government continued building with private money in spite of the WB report, Patkar and the farmers took the case to the Indian supreme court. Construction was halted for six years, while the court deliberated. Then to widespread dismay in 2000 it voted 2:1 in favour of raising the dam.

The DVD ends noting that thousands more homes will be submerged as the dam's height is raised to 110 metres. The dam-builders are now seeking to raise it to a new height of 122 metres.

Battles continue to be waged. But the spirit of peaceful resistance exemplified by the Save the Narmada movement, and captured so well in this potent DVD, is an inspiration to others confronting mega projects like the mind-numbingly huge Three Gorges and Tiger Leaping Gorge dams in China.

View clips, photographs and order Drowned Out at www.spannerfilms.net. For latest news on Sardar Sarovar visit www.narmada.org. Robert Alstead writes for www.iofilm.ca



Woman and submerged temple



Falling

TWENTY SOMETHING

by Ishi Dinim

Recovering from waves of sickness. Truly amazing how much unwanted product a human body can create, an abundant natural reminder to cherish our capabilities. Since the end of the summer I've been trying to deal with feeling crappy beyond words while working at the same time. Lots of coughing and time to dwell.

In between stints of hard work I fell ill for six weeks with a sinus infection. Most of that time was spent stuck in bed stuck with myself. When you've got that much time to knock around in your brain certain things become apparent, a sense of bitter honesty creeps in. There were moments when I really believed that I might be dying. I knew I was sick for so many reasons. I started to take responsibility for those that I could, for allowing my lifestyle to create disease. Working inside the belly of a propaganda entertainment machine isn't always inspiring or satisfying. I have internalized the notion that I am cheap labour, an automaton devoid of personality. I often search the faces of people and see my own misery looking back. What the hell am I doing with my life? I want to live to be a healthy old man; it's too easy to rationalize wasting my life away. I wish I could just start it all over again with a fresh outlook, motivated, idealistic, and with a renewed hope for humanity. That's not happening.

My own insecurities and searches are being reflected as I meet people who share their own crises about the directions they're going in. Conversation after conversation reveals a genuine discontent with where we are at as a planet and our place within this culture. How can we reconcile all the various pulls on our time and attention? I want to follow my dreams and still have a roof over my head. When everything threatens to crumble apart, a safety net appears.

Big changes are aching to be made, the ground is cracking, and it is time to jump. I leap towards my purpose. Fresh air rushing up to meet me. This new perspective is

unusual and invigorating, I notice things I never have before. There're bunches of other jumpers too, sewing nets together. My fear of heights is gone too – in the free fall I left my fears back up on the cliff, they're floating away. Life is speeding up but not in a stressful sort of way. Even the prospect of crashing below doesn't cause panic; I'd still only be a speck joining the big picture. I reach out to the extended hands of falling souls, together we make the nets that will break our descent. The nets work, all the diving dreamers are banding together, networking to manifest a different future.

The worst possible thing is not that I could fail. Nothing would be more terrible than stagnating on a dull self-depreciating ledge of inactivity. Purging my last chunk, dropping from my mouth like so many unspoken obstacles. I need to live more. Not because one day I'll die, no I need to live more because I'm alive this, just once...

Wording:

"I hate mankind, for I think myself one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am." – Joseph Barretti

"If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gave it to." – Dorothy Parker

"The chief value of money lies in the fact that one lives in a world in which it is overestimated." – H.L. Mencken

"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one." – Albert Einstein

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Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti, and ponders many things. Currently he is trying to figure out what to do with the rest of his life. contactishi@yahoo.ca waiting to hear echoes back...



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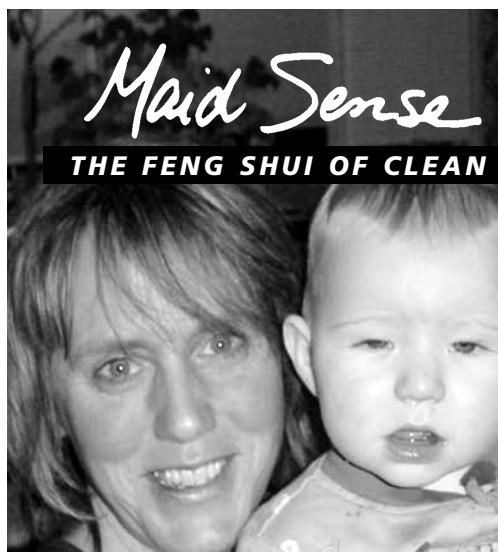
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Don't mistake criticism of USA for contempt

SCIENCE MATTERS

by David Suzuki

What have you done? What have you done? It's the question I wanted to ask my friends in the US after last month's election result. But I already knew the answer. They did everything they could. They just lost.

So now we have four more years of George W. Bush's regressive social, environmental and foreign policies to look forward to. That certainly doesn't bode well for science, the environment or human rights in the USA, or elsewhere for that matter.

Do such statements make me "anti-US?" According to many pundits and politicians weighing in on both sides of the border after the election it does. Apparently, disagreeing with the US popular vote makes you either anti-American or "intolerant" or some sort of "high-minded liberal elitist."

Even some of our elected Canadian parliamentarians insist that any critical analysis of the US or its policies simply amounts to anti-Americanism. The irony, of course, is that this is exactly the kind of "you're

either with us or against us" mentality that drove many of the criticisms of the Bush administration in the first place.

In his first term, President Bush forged a path of US unilateralism in the world community. He pushed a "me-first" agenda and was willing to trample human rights, science and the environment to do it. Just ask the 5,000 scientists, including 48 Nobel laureates, who have signed onto a statement accusing the Bush administration of "manipulation of the process through which science enters into its decisions."

Yet now, those who dare criticize the choice of the slim majority of US voters who picked Bush are being accused of being anti-US. Well, if being anti-US means being against the war in Iraq, supportive of women's rights, supportive of progressive environmental policies, against the missile defence system, supportive of stem-cell research and supportive of same-sex marriage, then

sign me up. But I don't believe it does.

Simply disagreeing with that slim majority of voters does not make a person anti-US. In my youth I received a scholarship from a US university worth more than my father made in a year and it allowed me to attend one of the finest colleges in the world. Later I earned a PhD there and I am forever grateful to the people of the US for that. When I returned to Canada, I could not compete with my peers elsewhere in the world because of the poor funding available in Canada at the time. I stayed in the States because I received a large grant. I will never forget the generosity of the US and owe a huge debt of gratitude. But it is precisely because I love America that I am so profoundly disturbed by what is going on there. Unquestioning acceptance of the status quo isn't exactly a US ideal. In fact, it strikes me as decidedly un-US.

So yes, when 52 percent of US voters cast ballots for Bush, I will say that I think they made a mistake. And when 11 states

vote overwhelmingly to ban gay marriage, I will speak up. Disagreeing with a ban on same-sex marriage is not a matter of being out of touch with "US values." It's a matter of human rights. When one group in society is singled out and repressed and not given the same opportunities as others, then their rights are being violated. That is simply wrong. It doesn't matter if the majority of people voted for it. You can't vote away human rights.

Pundits who insist that critics of President Bush are anti-US are really saying that if 52 percent of Americans believe anything then that's what the US stands for and everyone else has to respect that. This is a morally relativistic viewpoint that doesn't even withstand the most basic of scrutiny and critics of the Bush administration should not be bullied into believing it does.

Those of us who feel that 52 percent of US voters made a mistake on November 2 don't hate Americans. On the contrary, we care enough about the people and the ideal the country is supposed to represent to be very, very concerned.

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continued from page 4

MA He was kind of scary for me. I was very young when I was working with him. He was brilliant, brilliant as a psychotherapist. He could take someone and intuitively get him or her to start expressing, but in those days I could see there was no pattern. He wasn't someone you could really study like Virginia. I spent quite a bit of time with Fritz, but in fact we were studying his genius. What I learned from Fritz was that there's a flow of seeing that people have, that when you learn to get into that flow you can see the world at a much deeper level than you can otherwise.

My analogy might be the difference between being able to run a personal computer like we can now. You can produce a magazine with a personal computer and understand a lot more of the deep structure of developing a result. In those days it was all hit and miss and Fritz's hit and miss was wonderful to watch, but it was very difficult for his followers to understand the deep structure of what he was doing. It was a hard road for his students.

Now, Milton Erickson was another matter.

JR You named Erickson College after him. What about him made such an impact?

MA First of all, he was a very simple person in terms of the way he treated life in general. He gave himself to his inner

intuitive process in such a way that he allowed his deeper knowing to do all the work. He understood the difference between the conscious and deeper knowing selves such that he could allow his perception in any given situation to truly do the work. Only later would he, and very lightly, bring his conscious mind along to chatter about what it all meant. Milton was very focused on simply allowing the work to happen through him in the same way that most great spiritual teachers do.

JR How did he do it?

MA He had some basic principles and I've discovered when we truly work from those principles everything happens – psychotherapy, coaching, the whole process of human development, any kind of learning, and the whole quality of discovering your own creative development. All of that becomes very easy when you simply notice that, first of all, people are okay – that was one of his fundamental principles. And, not only are people okay, but you specifically are okay. There's nothing broken.

A lot of the recent understandings of the brain have supported this completely. Human beings are really okay. All this

focus on getting the right drug, the right anti-depressant, to somehow fix your broken chemicals – it's not needed. As soon as we discover the flow of your intuition, of our deeper learning, away we go into the reaches of our own development and we begin on our path in a way that takes us home.

JR That people are okay is a wonderful principle, did he have others?

MA Yes, that people have all the resources they need, and this is the heart of coaching. You can sit down with a client and as you ask questions you begin to assist the person as they find their own understanding of what they need to do. So, coaching is not about giving advice or assisting or taking over the game from someone.

My most recent analogy is that it's like curling – people throw their own purpose ahead of them and a good coach clears the way for that purpose to aim and hit its mark.

Milton was very much like that. He listened deeply for people's purpose. He was hugely aware of the human spirit, of the passion that people had for life and he saw people as heroes. He really gave room for people to find a place to deeply respect

themselves.

Another principle was that people deserve no blame. This world seems to have so much black and white thinking, so the growing awareness that people can come back from all sorts of spins and downsides and really discover their own vision is new. I think Christopher Reeves is a good example of someone who found his vision even in complete adversity.

With coaching we're working with that capacity of people to reinvent the moment and discover a game worth playing even when they think some aspect of their development corners them. Everybody's got some area where they're not quite so sure of themselves – maybe their goals in learning or relationship or health or finances or even their spiritual areas of development.

People discover they deserve no blame for the seeming sidetracks, that those are highways into deeper learning.

JR It's a path to discover a part of yourself that you didn't realize.

MA Milton's model was that there's no such thing as failing. He had a wonderful framework on failure, that if something's worth learning it's worth doing badly at the beginning. We had fail forward. So we can treat everything as a feedback frame for becoming satisfied with our own path.

JR What was he like?

MA He was amazing. Milton had polio



Deep hope

EARTHFUTURE.COM

by Guy Dauncey

Once-fertile fields lie fallow where the seeds were never sown, and dust is deep around the dreams where idle winds have blown. So unfulfilled ambitions fade and slowly disappear, while introspective hours pass in swan song to the year.

- S.F. Records

It all began 4.5 billion years ago, 50,000 years after the Earth was formed, when Earth's crust was still molten magma. A planetesimal the size of Mars came crashing into the Earth, pushing it off its vertical axis, creating the tilt which gives our planet its seasons. As Earth orbits the sun once a year, the tilt affects the amount of sunshine that reaches parts of the planet at different times of the year.

When the northern part of the Earth tilts towards the sun, we receive more sunlight, causing lovers' hearts to break into song, and everything to burst into blossom.

When the northern part tilts away from the sun, we receive less sunlight, causing

leaves to fall to their quiet winter beds, snow to fall, and poets to write sad odes to lost hopes and passing loves.

Spring, summer, fall, winter. Bird and whale migrations. We owe them all to that ancient collision.

It also created the moon. The metals in the planetesimals sank deep into the Earth's core, and some of the rock was flung back into space where it coalesced to form the moon, causing lovers all over the world to experience the most enchanting of feelings.

Here on the wet, west coast of Canada, as December moves towards the longest night of the year, and hopelessness for some becomes worthy of its own shrine, it seems appropriate to dwell on hope. For as the winter solstice passes, at 4:42 am on Tuesday, December 21, Earth's orbit around the sun will begin to bring us longer days and more sunlight.

There are three kinds of hope. There is simple hope, that says, "I hope I win the lottery," or "I hope my children find love, and happy marriages."

There is heroic hope that says "However

dark the times, however dire the threat, I will never give up hope. As long as there is breath in our bodies, we can continue to hope and work for victory." This is the kind of hope that Churchill offered the British people in the darkest years of the Second World War, when Hitler had occupied most of Europe. It is the kind of hope that many activists hold tight to as they struggle to end the onslaught against nature that the human race is pursuing, led by the world's most powerful nations and corporations.

And there is deep hope that says, "However dire things may seem, the universe wants life to succeed. It wants dreams to be realized and love to be fulfilled. Deep down in its evolutionary origins, it wants life to discover that it is part of a wondrous miracle, with a spiritual nature and that all consciousness journeys towards wholeness."

Is this just an interesting idea? Is it an article of faith, like the virgin birth, regardless of what science says? Is it a foolish fallacy that gives us comfort against the cold emptiness of space, despair and death? Or is it a potentially valid description of evolution that may one day be proven scientifically, becoming a new guiding paradigm, linking science and spirit, political change and human hope?

We have to hold strong to science as the means by which we explore the secrets of nature; but we must also remember that science has set itself an artificial boundary, limiting its inquiries to the realm of matter, leaving the realm of spirit and soul

to others. The boundary was established in the 17th century as a way to keep the church happy by not poaching on its territory, and to guarantee that scientific evidence was solid and tangible. "Here there be angels" was not something that lent itself to scientific scrutiny, so it was easier to leave it alone.

But in leaving it alone, science deprived itself of access to the whole inner world of consciousness. Later, some scientists would say that consciousness was simply an artifact, created by the brain's chemistry. They would even deny that animals (and male babies) felt pain. Their intellectual descendents still insist that evolution is no more than a random process of selfish genes, seeking to replicate.

If we acknowledge that the spiritual world is real, because of our own inner experiences, we need to cross that boundary. In so doing, we open the possibility that evolution is more than a random material process, and we have to ask the critical question, "If spirituality exists, where did it come from? Where is it going?" It is here, when you ponder deeply on the nature of love, life and the universe, that deep hope emerges. In spite of stupidity, in spite of cruelty, in spite of death, a deeper force prevails and lives within us, every day.

Guy Dauncey is author of *Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change* (New Society Publishers) and other titles. He lives in Victoria.

www.earthfuture.com

at age 15. Can you imagine going to sleep with what seems like a bad cold and waking up four days later only being able to move your eyeballs? He nearly died in the interim and ended up on life support and was in a wheelchair for a while.

In those days what they did was move the bed into the kitchen. So from there Milton watched his baby sister and began to visualize himself being able to raise his head like her and he began to get some movement. So that became the focus of his energy for two years. He'd watch her and visualize himself learning as she did, and the doctors say today that he literally retrained the brain cells. Two and a half years after that first paralysis he was walking with two canes.

That taught him about visualization. He was a visualization specialist and the training we do at Erickson is focusing on how we can use this amazing visual capacity of the cerebral cortex to assist with emotional development.

He discovered that people could, through deep seeing, really begin to take charge of the metaphor of their own life.

Marilyn Atkinson, PhD is a registered psychologist, professional coach, NLP master trainer and founder of Erickson College. This is the first of a two-part interview; in part two we will discuss recent discoveries in brain research. For further information contact www.erickson.edu, 604-879-5600 or email info@erickson.edu

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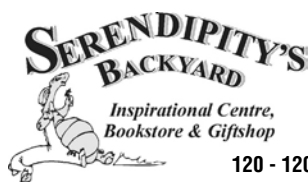
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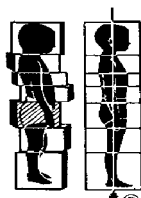
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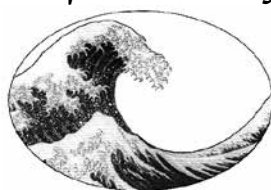
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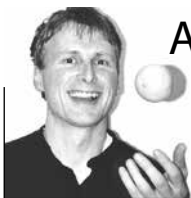
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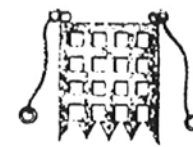


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Avoid becoming totally absorbed in immediate realities
– always remember your ultimate dreams.

- Anonymous

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One should neither be overly jubilant when flattered
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- Anonymous



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To all of our brothers and sisters, whatever your beliefs, faith or customs, at this time of year we invite you to pray with us, "Let us put our heads and our hearts together and find ways and means to practically knit the world together in love. Let us spread the fragrance of God's love and make human integration a reality." ~ Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj
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Gifts for people and the environment

by Vesanto Melina

Would you like to have a positive impact with your gift giving this holiday season? Do you shy away from Christmas commercialism, yet wonder what to offer those you love? Consider these gifts that keep on giving and that have far-reaching benefits:

- Items that help people enjoy the great outdoors: skis, tennis rackets, bikes, snowshoes, boots, a compass and whistle for hikers.
- Sets of sports equipment for a couple or a family. If you're flush with cash, buy high-end items, otherwise head for your local sporting goods recycling store.
- A family cross-country season pass. For example, a pass to Cypress Mountain includes unlimited snowshoeing and tubing, provides regular, fun exercise, and is cheaper than a one-time family ski holiday.
- Clothing and footwear that your loved ones can use to be outdoors and appreciate nature.
- For someone who cycles in all seasons, Gortex socks available at Mountain Equipment Co-op and other sporting goods stores.
- A really good rain hat.
- For potential travelers, stocking items and fascinating books on various destinations. (Check out The Travel Bug and the travel section of bookstores.)
- Monthly bus passes to help your loved ones use transit systems.
- For a wheelchair-bound friend or relation, HandiDart tickets (www.independent-living.ca/HandiDart.asp)
- For an elderly person, an invitation, redeemable on request, for a trip to the

park or out for a cup of tea.

- Assistance in getting a Christmas tree or decorating their home for the holidays, for an elderly person.
- Baking together.
- For a preschooler, glue, coloured paper, pipe cleaners, and whatever else you can think of, assembled in a do-it-yourself arts and crafts kit. Check out Ruby's Dog on Main Street for materials.
- Membership in EarthSave (www.earthsave.bc.ca), Amnesty International (www.amnesty.ca), Western Canada Wilderness Committee (www.wildernesscommittee.org), Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org), the Burns Bog Society (www.burnsbog.org) or another worthy organization.
- Tickets to an inspirational concert or local seminar.
- One or more nights and days at a beautiful B&B listed in Common Ground from time to time.
- A gift certificate for a healing consultation or a massage. Read CG for leads.
- A CD, tape or video.
- A book that helps to create inner peace.
- A video by a local filmmaker or video producer.
- Coupons you create yourself, that offer house cleaning, babysitting, or a foot massage.
- Dog-walking services. (Children, teens, or adults can offer this gift.)
- Organic nuts, seeds and dried fruit, nicely packaged.
- New, healthful grocery and personal care items. (Have fun wandering around the natural foods store and prepare your

own gift basket.)

- A gift of organic produce, delivered for a few weeks (by one of Vancouver's many services, or by Ladybug Organics in the Fraser Valley.)
- Stevia powder or drops, the herbal sweetener that won't disturb blood sugar levels.
- An aromatic gift basket from Saje or similar.
- A subscription to Adbusters magazine (www.adbusters.org)
- Common Ground magazine mailed each month (to someone far away, who misses BC.)
- A sampling of veggie burgers, so people can discover their favourite brands. (This is a possible gift for someone with heart disease or another chronic illness, who is trying to change eating habits.)
- A gift certificate for a local vegetarian restaurant (for ideas in Vancouver, Victoria and other locations, see www.veg dining.com)
- For those with food sensitivities, the new Food Allergy Survival Guide. Perhaps choose a recipe and prepare a delicious baked item free of gluten, dairy, or their specific allergen.
- Respect your own values by, for example, avoiding items made of animal products, products tested on animals, or items from countries whose politics you don't want to support. (This may shorten your gift list!)
- For people who don't really want gifts, find out if they would appreciate a donation to a favourite charity.
- Ask your friend or relation what she or he would like, that will help to create

a better world.

- Buy as little as possible for Christmas; make gifts or baked goods; send letters and love.
- Spend time with people (instead of giving things.)
- Invite friends or neighbours for a potluck dinner at which you discuss great ideas, new dreams and share how to transform your smaller or larger community from the religion of consumption to the vision of sustainability.

Vesanto Melina is a regular columnist with Common Ground. Her website is www.nutrispeak.com

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— Marianne Williamson

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On Track Zodiac

DECEMBER 2004 by Ilona Hedi Granik



ARIES (March 21 – April 19)

You have not only walked, but
danced your way across the
coals into victory. You feel more com-
plete and grounded as you wait for the
signal to cross on the next green light.
You are no longer bound by a shoe that
doesn't fit.



TAURUS (April 20 – May 21)

You can't always tame the
inner shrew, but you can cer-
tainly hold back the part of you that seeks
conflict. Making sure you think before
you speak could save you from having to
take four steps back. Soon enough you
will understand how to cultivate your
expression and make peace with others.



GEMINI (May 22 – June 20)

Your creative genius is flying
right off your fingertips like
sparks. You can be the alchemist and
'break free of old hang-ups. Your desire
for freedom is bringing out your higher
potential. Raise a ruckus and let the chips
fall where they may. All is in order.



CANCER (June 21 – July 22)

This is a time you will not soon
forget as it is marked with
intensity and awareness. Illumination is
beyond each door that you open. The
seeker is being nourished with wisdom.
Drops of nectar awaken your appetite for
knowledge. Your decision-making ability
is equal to the task.



LEO (July 23 – Aug. 22)

The challenge is in staying
flexible while you wait for
the clouds to pass. Raise your glass in
celebration as you open to the possibili-
ties presented to you. The heart is not a
lonely rider in the vessel you call your
body. You recognize that your path to
love is uncharted.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22)

While your words hold power,
the perfectionist in you seeks
anonymity. The appreciation that you
desire also finds you free from the ties that
bind. If you thought you were becoming
too fanatical you certainly have pulled
your act together now. Go with bliss.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22)

Surprisingly, you will be able
to relax amid all the hustle

and bustle in your life. Your charm and
stillness will have people desiring to stay
centered like you. You move out from the
circle with serenity. You are meeting each
day like an old friend.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21)

It may seem you are shoul-
dering more responsibility than you care
to. Although the lessons you learn now
seem arduous, foundations are becoming
strengthened. The road to abundance is
paved with your good intentions.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21)

Give your heart a flower and
get a much-needed visit to the spa. Try
not to jeopardize your fragile nature by
rushing foolhardy. If erratic behaviour
has gotten the best of you, then slow
down and watch nature more intent-
ly. Give up the ghosts of the past. You
deserve to serve yourself by being served.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)

This is no time to curl up
in defeat. Utilize this time to eradicate
the illusions that you once held dear.
Self respect goes a long way. By using
your intelligence you are making timely
choices for success. Accomplishment is
your new frequency.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 – Feb. 19)

You have been using discrimi-
nation even in the most alarming set of
circumstances. The people you associated
with were a direct mirror. Change your
influences and shift awareness. You are
holding your own as you walk with the
gods of adventure.



PISCES (Feb. 20 – March 20)

Contentment will fill you as
you reflect on the year of per-
sonal challenges and upheaval. You have
come through the fires of change and
know yourself better than ever. Knowing
meets honouring and you shake hands
with grace. What goes along comes along
and liberation is on the horizon.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consul-
tant and author with 31 years of experience
in astrology, multi-media art and healing.
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List at: www.commonground.ca > Advertising > Datebook

DATEBOOK

DEC 6 & JAN 17

Sagittarius & Capricorn Astrological Dinners Now at Star Anise Restaurant! Join Host Teresa Wacławik with talk by Astrologer Dawn Muncaster. Dinner, door prizes & entertainment. To reserve: 604-732-5538

DEC 8

How to Manage Holiday Stress with Geoffrey Ayi-Bonte 7-8pm Free admission Lonsdale Quay Hotel, North Vancouver contact info: CMHA 604-987-6959

DEC 10 - 19

Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche 2004 visit to Canada, Victoria. See our ad in this issue. www.yeshehorlo.ca (250)658-0357, damchos@shaw.ca

DEC 11

Shamanic Drumming Circle. Journeywork to connect with your non-ordinary reality power animal spirit guardians/teachers. Re-discover your aboriginal heart. Saturday. 7pm. Newcomers welcome. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre. Donation. 604-418-9636 www.shamanichealing.info

DEC 12, 13, 14

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro: \$10. Course: \$295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.

DEC 15

John Reishman and Trisha Gagnon World renowned mandolin players Benefit Concert - free admission 7-8pm Lonsdale Quay Hotel, North Vancouver CMHA 604-987-6959

DEC 18

Wolfsong Winter Solstice Celebration. Saturday, 7pm. Participate chanting shared, sacred songs of the spirit of the land. Bring your N. American hand drum, cedar flute, didgeridoo, crystal bowls. Vancouver Multicultural Centre, 1254 W. 7th. Donation. (604) 418 9636 www.shamanichealing.info

DEC 18

Leora Cashe Inspiration' CD Release Concert 8:00pm Chan Family Health Theatre 950 West 28th Ave (BC Children's Hospital) Tickets \$10/\$15/\$18 604-257-0366 www.festivalboxoffice.com www.leoracash.com

DEC 19

Christmas In The Round chanting with Jerry DesVoignes and the MantraVani Orchestra 7:30pm, Trinity St. Marks, \$20 Larch / W.2nd Ave 872-7117

DEC 24

TLC's Heritage Christmas Celebration. Activities include: green gifts store, auction, heritage crafts, evening wine and cheese reception. Call The Land Conservancy of BC 604-733-2313 for details.

DEC 24-27

Christmas Celebration Retreat. A spiritual celebration of the inner beauty of Christmas. Special meditations, contemplate, relax. Delicious food. Walks to beach, forest. SRMH Centre 1-604-740-0898

DEC 29 - JAN 1

New Year Gathering. Come and imbibe peace and beauty at our Centre for New Year. Delicious food. Trails to beach and woodland. SRMH Centre 1-604-740-0898

DEC 31

Walking the Labyrinth with Jerry DesVoignes and the One Voice Harmonic Choir St. Paul's Labyrinth 5-7pm 1130 Jervis St. By donation. Sacred chants/mantras, Throat Singing, Tibetan bells, conch shells. jerry@healingvoices.net

JAN 14, 15, 16

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro: \$10. Course: \$295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.

JAN 16 - FEB 12

Yoga Retreat In Costa Rica All levels welcome. See our ad in the Resource Directory Education section. Call Karuna at 250-229-4793 www.becometocostarica.com

JAN 18

The Silva Method Presentation Conference: Basic Seminar 7pm UBC Robson Sq. Free Intro call 604 925 0816 info@silvamethodcanada.com See our ad in the Resource Directory

MAR 6 - 12

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MONDAYS

Shambhala Buddhism Open House 7pm meditation instruction, sitting meditation practice. 8pm refreshments, Buddhist talk and/or video and discussion. Free. Shambhala Meditation Centre, 3275 Heather at West 17th.

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic sessions - only \$15. Evenings only. By appointment. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. 604.875.8818

WEDNESDAYS

Hawaiian Healing Night 7pm. Hawaiian guided Meditation, Sharing the Aloha, and snacks after, meet like minded people and share. \$5.00 donation. At Hale Ola - a place of Healing 1215 Madison ave. Burnaby 604-431-7474 Kaimana and Moanikeala

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DATEBOOK LISTINGS

Follow the links on our website. Deadline is the 15th of the month. \$35 for 25 word listing



Catherine McCreary, VanCity board member; Elain Duvall, chair, VanCity board of directors; Dave Mowat, VanCity CEO and Michael Wilson, executive director of Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society, winner of the 2004 VanCity award.

JAN 20

Humanitarian Intervention talk by lawyer Gail Davidson, 7:30 pm Unitarian Church Centre, 949 W.49th Ave. All welcome. No charge. Info: (604) 874-9982 or lkazdan@shaw.ca 604-872-7117

MONDAYS

Free acupuncture treatment. Relief muscle, joints, and nerve pain etc. \$5.00 Registration fee with Reg.Ac. Mornings only. By appt: 604-961-8834 Acuquimed Centre (Broadway Station).

WEDNESDAYS

The Healing Bodywork Centre offers a "Pamper your Partner" evening every last Wednesday of the month. 604.737.8350

VanCity \$1 million grant for drug rehab

A Surrey non-profit organization has won a \$1-million grant from VanCity Credit Union to build a drug and alcohol addiction services centre in Whalley.

This year's \$1-million VanCity award goes to the Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society to complete a \$5.6-million campaign to build the Phoenix Centre near Surrey Memorial Hospital. This 34,000-square-foot centre will be one of the first projects to integrate addiction services, transitional housing, employment and education services under one roof for more than 100 recovering addicts per year. It is expected to be open next fall.

"The construction of the Phoenix Centre will be only the beginning of the VanCity award legacy. The real legacy will be in the lives of the individuals who find the necessary support to overcome their addiction and build the skills necessary to make a contribution to their community,"

says Michael Wilson, executive director of the Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society.

The \$1-million VanCity award, the largest corporate gift of its kind in Canada, was established in 2001 by VanCity's board of directors to support the social, environmental and economic well being of the community. The funds are available to non-profit groups in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Victoria.

The Phoenix Centre was chosen from three finalists by VanCity members who voted by ballot, online and over the phone for their choice of project in September and October. This is the fourth year of the award that saw applications submitted from 80 non-profits and the highest number of votes in the award's history.

Funds come from a percentage of VanCity profits set aside each year for community initiatives.

The two other finalists included Pacific Legal Education Association for its KidStart mentoring program to create a permanent mentoring centre and expand services across the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island; and the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children to build a one-stop centre for child, youth and family services in Victoria's western area where there are many single-parent and low-income families in need.

"These were all worthy initiatives. We would have been proud to fund any of them, but the decision was up to our members," says Elain Duvall, chair of VanCity's board of directors. "The VanCity award is about innovation and the Phoenix Centre, with its integration of health, social and economic services, has really shown that. We think that it will make a huge difference, not only in the lives of recovering addicts, but on the health of the community overall."

"We are pleased to see so many of our members working with us to build better communities," Mowat says. "We fully support their choice of the Phoenix Centre. This project will take a visionary approach to delivering much-needed services and we look forward to seeing the difference it will make in the years to come." For more information about the Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society, visit www.phoenixcentre.ca.

Letters of intent for the next VanCity award will be accepted from non-profit organizations in the communities VanCity serves starting in March 2005. www.vancity.com/Community/CommunityPrograms/Grants/TheVanCityAward.

VanCity is Canada's largest credit union, with \$9 billion in assets, 305,000 members, and 41 branches throughout Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and Victoria. VanCity owns Citizens Bank of Canada, serving members across the country by telephone, ATM and the internet. Both VanCity and Citizens Bank are guided by a commitment to corporate social responsibility and to improve the quality of life in the communities where we live and work. CommonGround has been a VanCity member since 1982 starting at Branch 1.



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My 22 favourites

by Joseph Roberts

The following is a stream of consciousness writing that was written in one sitting in the early morning. After finishing I curiously counted how many items there were. To my surprise and delight there were exactly 22. This was a shock because Common Ground was about to celebrate its 22nd anniversary. CG has been an independent Canadian magazine dedicated to inspiration, health and creativity since 1982. The invisible hand was guiding the pen and the writing was coming through me rather than by me. A similar experience occurs when playing piano or guitar. There is a timeless place where all music, no, not just music comes from, but where all comes from.

A dear friend once asked when the lotus opens to the sun is it the sun that opens the flower? He then said it appears to be that way, but really it is the nature that is the sun and the flower that opens.

So here is a very personal and poetic list of my favourite things. Thank you for the visible and invisible kindness you have contributed to our existence. Your presence and caring support has helped my world. May my list help you remember what is dear to you. Consider writing your own list leading up to this New Year. It is good to remember and be grateful for all the wonder and love we have.

THE LIST

Favourite actor: you
Favourite movie: this world
Favourite musician: Mike Scott
Favourite book: The Power of Now
Favourite commandment:
Love the Lord your God with all
your heart, mind and body
Favourite rule: The Golden Rule,
love your neighbour as yourself
Favourite music: my own, but where it
comes from is a mystery
Favourite day: today
Favourite place: here
Favourite lover: The Beloved
Favourite emotion: joyous wonder
Favourite destination: in your arms
Favourite kiss: presence
Favourite gift to myself: forgiveness
Favourite dessert: kissing
Favourite hello: your warm smile
Favourite novel: current one
Favourite restaurant: peace
Favourite dog: happy
Favourite opinion:
Favourite judgment: none
Favourite touch: yours

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6,727,288 B2

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BioCalth® is a new generation Calcium supplement (Calcium L-threonate) that improves bone health. BioCalth® helps to increase collagen production that protects joint and cartilage structures.

BioCalth® is the only Calcium supplement that actually carries U.S. patent and being one of the U.S. doctor's recommended supplement.

BioCalth® is the key to healthy bones and joints.



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on Thursday
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Tel: (604) 539-9799**

Healthy Christmas Supplement Gift for you & your family!

Free Bone Mineral Density Test.

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**BioCalth Enterprises International (Canada) Co. Ltd. www.biocalth.com
Available at Most Health Food Stores & Pharmacies**

Winter Solstice Gathering

Join with others to celebrate
Winter Solstice 2004

Song, chant and ceremony
(inner connections, ancestral
healing, sun and earth
ceremonies, holy child
within)

Enjoy and be lifted up by the
experience

Dec. 17-19, 2004; supper Fri
to lunch Sun

Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem
— (Chehalis Healing House)

— retreat center, magnificent
Natural setting in the Fraser
Valley east of Mission — 2hr
from Vancouver

Cost: \$250- meals and
accommodation included
(bring your own bedding)

Contact Lois Hansen
ph/fax 604-820-7145
email: loishansen@shaw.ca



Help Your Body Heal Itself

The unique synergistic properties of Flor•Essence help cleanse and condition your body.

The human body is an incredible organism. Although it often seems otherwise, it wants us to be healthy. Every minute of every day, it does all it can to keep us immune from infections and to eliminate harmful wastes and toxins. Not surprisingly, sometimes the task proves overwhelming.

Avoid toxic build up! In the constant struggle to maintain good health, effective elimination by the liver, kidneys, bowels and pores is our first line of defence. Poor diet, environmental and workplace pollution, bacteria and viruses, medications, smoking and substance abuse, aging and other factors, individually or collectively, can overload these organs and allow wastes and toxins to build up. Over time these build ups can have far reaching consequences, making us ever more vulnerable to serious illness, and leaving the body ill-equipped to carry out its natural healing functions when illnesses occur.

The blend of eight premium quality medicinal herbs in Flor•Essence not only helps the body excrete wastes and toxins, but helps:

- boost the immune system
- balance critical hormone levels
- aid digestion
- balance acid/alkaline levels
- improve inter-cellular communications
- soothe cell membranes in the respiratory and digestive systems



Why settle for anything less?



Genuine

and still the strongest.



PART OF THE GREENS+ HEALTH PROGRAM

Research-Proven:

- ✓ More Energy
- ✓ Highest ORAC*
- ✓ Bone Support
- ✓ Antioxidant power of 6 servings of organic fruits and veggies
- ✓ Highest PRAL**

*Oxygen Radical Absorption Capacity, a measure of antioxidant ability (greens+ contains both fat & water soluble antioxidants)

**Potential Renal Acid Load, a measure of alkalinity (a more alkaline body = a healthier body)

Increase energy and improve overall well-being with the research-proven power of **greens+**.

Not only is **greens+** the green food category innovator and leader, it's also your only green food source of rich, energy-giving bee pollen, royal jelly and licorice. With 100% standardized herbal extracts and the promise to never contain added sugar or salt, only **greens+** assures you genuine results you can feel with every bottle. Drink your **greens+** daily to increase your energy and feel like a superhero – everyday!



Our Total Quality Obligation guarantees your satisfaction - or your money back.

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To sign up for our **Health & Happiness** online newsletter, go to greenspluscanada.com



Just look for the leaves.